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AUTHOR	Burg, Evelyn
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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the implementation of College Now!, a dual credit program offered through the City University of New York (CUNY) in a number of high schools across Queens. The goal of College Now! is to provide access to college-level liberal arts course materials within the high school setting, meeting college requirements and giving college credits, while serving a non-traditional student population who might not have considered going to college, as well as maintaining the commitment of those high school students who already intended to go to college. The College Now! student is generally an average student from an urban school with a predominately ESL population. The program offers classes that help ease the transition from high school to college while allowing students to earn college credit, and often high school credit as well. The program offers benefits to high school faculty by allowing them to teach at a higher level with fewer curricular restrictions while making some extra money. In addition, the program helps the colleges get a sense of what is going on at the high school, which facilitates the recruitment process. Includes a College Now! course syllabus and faculty and student survey instruments. (AUTH/NB)

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Border Crossings: Bringing *College Now!* to the Classroom

Evelyn Burg, LaGuardia Community College

ED 471 856

(What follows is a portion of a presentation made to the 2002 Community College Humanities Association Eastern Regional Conference, Oct. 24, 2002)

When I was a junior in high school , my mother had just finished her degree at Hunter College. She was friendly with one of her Philosophy professors there, and likely intending to keep me out of trouble, she suggested I sit in on her evening classes. So I did. I sat and I listened until I graduated and I brought my friends, since I was inspired by the teacher and the subject. Though slightly intimidated and therefore quiet, I remember how thrilling I found it to be actually spending two nights a week in a college class. During this time, I transformed from an average to a successful student, because I began making those significant intellectual connections between math, philosophy and literature, and because I began to feel a bit special and gain some intellectual confidence. So, I can honestly say I was a *College Now!* pioneer.

Because of that personal experience, this is a program that I really believe in, and it does work. Its not always easy making it happen, since we are continually confronted by bureaucratic contradictions and logistical hurdles. Therefore, besides telling you how worthwhile the program is, I want to share some of our problems and solutions, so that if you want to bring *College Now!* or a program like it to your college, you have a running start. If you can catch some of the balls thrown at you and duck others, your institution can participate in meaningful dialogue with the public schools and genuine change.

What is *College Now!*?

The grant has been in operation since the mid-1980s, and LaGuardia has been involved

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since 1987. We have chosen some entry level courses from a number of disciplines and, with the cooperation of those departments, are running these classes in a number of high schools across Queens. Because of the union contract, these must run after or before the regular school day. And because of pre-requisite issues, particularly acute in CUNY community colleges right now, these courses must be chosen carefully. This is financed by CUNY with monies from the budget. The funding follows the usual circuitous route through the bureaucracy, and is somehow in tandem with New York City's Department of Education.

The purpose of this city wide program is threefold:

1. To provide access to college-level liberal arts course material within the high-school setting, meeting college requirements and giving college credits, yet serve a non-traditional student population who might not have considered going to college, or going immediately, as well as to maintain the commitment of those who already wanted to go. That is, these are not Advanced Placement students, ours are generally average students, 70-80 GPAs, depending on the course, and these are urban schools, with largely ESL populations. We offer interesting, engaging and useful classes, in order to ease the transition from high school to college, jump-starting high school students with college credits. In many cases they receive high school credit as well. In this way, the students are invested in attending college before graduation: it focuses the them on college as a next step. The courses are such that what they learn in these classes should carry over into their other high school classes, and helping the students form that tissue of abstract connections that makes one feel confident that they can find a place for any new idea.

2. There are benefits for faculty as well. They get to teach a course that is different, perhaps at a higher level and with fewer curricular restrictions than their regular courses. Introduction to Psychology or our department's Literacy and Propaganda, for example, are not similar to anything in the high school curriculum. It gives talented, intellectually interested faculty an opportunity to shine, make some extra money, and a have a greater stake in the system. *College Now!* was very important for keeping up morale of talented faculty when the Giuliani Administration refused to raise salaries. Several of our faculty have become Assistant Principals. The classes are generally a little smaller and faculty have freedom to shape the class as they would like, within some looser or stricter parameters. The requirements we impose, like the syllabus, are often new to high school faculty who plan their lessons only a week ahead and who often do not have a concept behind their courses.

3. Therefore, the intention of the program is to raise the morale and intellectual level of the students and the faculty all together. But better communication with the high school benefits the college at well. Regarding recruitment and getting a sense of what is going on at the high school level it is invaluable. We arrange professional development workshops that are as rewarding and useful for us as for the teachers. We have links to the high schools that can create better understanding: faculty at the high school level can get a sense of what will be expected, and we can measure where the high school students are and what they are looking for from the colleges. More significantly, we expand the collaboration among educators, educating each other: the people on the front lines know a lot about teaching.

Furthermore, there is a political opportunity to infuse a holistic approach to learning and to connect the dots not only for students, but for the educational society at large. We don't need

to function within a vacuum, these relationships and transitions should be more fluid for us all, bringing us together.

These are the ideas behind College Now! and the program is working. One of our earliest participating high schools, William Cullen Bryant, in Woodside, which has been improving tremendously on its own, now reports that approximately 87% of its graduating students go on to institutes of higher learning, and almost every student in *College Now!* does. Grover Cleveland sends 85% of its students to college and again over 98% of the *College Now!* students go. There you have the happy aspect of our program and the obvious reason for pursuing these programs.

Now comes the discussion of the messy details. College -- high school collaborations are not simple, since you are merging two bureaucracies. Each bureaucracy, tied to its own necessities, tends to be a little dismissive of the other's. What follows is a discussion of some of the thorny logistical issues caused by educational politics generally, and especially those of New York City and CUNY, and how we coped, in order to suggest some things to think about for those people who might want to write a grant. Forewarned is forearmed.

The College Coordinator's Responsibilities

The cordinator supervises the running of the courses for each department. This means interviewing and hiring faculty, explaining the requirements of the courses, including choosing the textbooks, etc., and traveling to the campuses to do peer observations. Together with our grant administrators, and the other grant faculty, we plan annual professional development events as well. These developments have included hands-on tours of the LaGuardia Archives, with special demonstrations and Internet training specifically related to the courses, and course development trainings. Yet in these last two years a large chunk of time is spent on curricular

issues; some are related to the nature of the project, and some are externally generated and problematic.

First, we have had to revise the courses so they can be standardized without dictating the course entirely, since the point of the enterprise is to allow faculty to develop creatively. Yet the faculty are at the high schools not the college, so they are at several disadvantages: they have neither the benefits of a department, a chairperson, peers in the field , nor do they have many conferences to help them. Nor do they have the day to day supervision. They rarely have extensive training in the discipline, though we do require Master's degrees. They rely on you. Or they don't. High school students may be just as bright and sometimes their skills are stronger than our community college students, but they are less mature and the high school culture is, without doubt, distinct from the college one. In order for the program to preserve the support of the college departments, and to facilitate transfer credit to other schools, we have to maintain a high standard. There are many people out there with reason to be skeptical.

And, in fact, the teachers do not have an easy situation. Students have to take these courses before or after the school day, and they are tired. The courses requirements must be explicit, or the path of least resistance is too tempting, and the classes get slack. For example, in our Literacy and Propaganda course, a number of my faculty were working on advertising campaigns with students. Yet none of the realities of demographics, budgets, regional or gender attitudes, nor client caprice were ever mentioned; it was merely a craft project and class presentation, and it was pedagogically unacceptable for a college class. I worked with faculty, suggesting exercises that might incorporate the real life marketing issues that advertisers face.

We require a textbook, and though we allow flexibility, an amount of material from it

must be completed. As stated previously, we require a term syllabus to be designed by faculty and given to students at the start. I have rarely had any problem with this, though faculty sometimes panic at the idea of a syllabus; so we provide a sample.

The course descriptions have to be re-written with new objectives, to make sure they are clear and consistent with the catalogue. Again to facilitate transfer, they have to be comparable with courses at other colleges. We have to get a commitment from at least one or two four year schools that they will accept these transfer credits when we design the course in our departments, especially if it is an odd one like our Literacy and Propaganda, and the administrators have to revisit that issue as well, in order to guarantee the students do get the credit. Whatever we can do ahead of time to avoid challenges, we do. The 4-year institutions are invisible players here and can sabotage all our credibility if they choose. They can do this to our graduates, so it's all that much easier to do it to the high school students. See Appendix A.

Testing and Placement: the "gateway" concept

College Now! was running along relatively smoothly when I got there. As it expanded, there were problems with book requisitions and with personnel coming and going, and high school coordinators doing what they were asked or not, or our doing it, and so on, but my department only had a few courses and it was a small operation. At that point the high schools placed students in our courses based on a CUNY-wide exam (WAT or FSAP) which we gave to the *College Now!* students. The college's students could pass the remedial classes by passing departmental exams and even without passing the CUNY exam, and they could move ahead in the institution. A student only had to pass the CUNY before he or she graduated, ONLY if he were going on to a 4 year CUNY College. So there was a certain play and freedom as far as who

could take courses and when. As far as *College Now!* was concerned, we gave the WAT or the FSAP Reading or Math exams–they were just placement exams and there was no issue of passing or failing.

Then, two years ago and with a tremendous amount of fanfare having to do with the Mayor's and the Board of Trustees attack on the Open Admissions policy, a new standardized entrance exam was inaugurated: the ACT. This functioned as a placement test, as the earlier exam did, but this one was to be an "exit from remediation" test as well. That meant a student was not permitted to proceed to English 101 or any course that required the remedial classes to be complete without passing the exam, which was more difficult that the earlier one. It was a gate. This was a calamity for our students at the college, and threw us into general curricular chaos.

It created special difficulties for the *College Now!* program We did not have access to those tests for placement. Yet they still functioned as a barrier for our students, since the departments had pre-requisites in place requiring that students be English 101-ready or simultaneously taking 101 in order to register for credit-bearing courses. So there was no way to place the high school students in the higher level disciplinary courses, such as Introductions to Psychology or Sociology, or Statistics, English 101, or Reading 103. The college was not permitted to let students, and that included our high schools students into credit-bearing courses. Students who did not place out of remedial courses with an 480 SAT score or 75 on the English Regents were stranded, no matter what their grades. For students who wanted to participate in *College Now!* who had either not yet taken the Regents or SAT, or who had not attained those scores, there was now a problem where there had been no problem.

So faculty working closely with our grant administrator arrived at a plan: "Gateway courses." The Reading Department and the Humanities department each had credit- bearing courses that did not require completion of Basic Skills. The English Department, had their upper level remedial course English 099, which in effect now moved into the 101 slot. Though it was not credit-bearing, it is a course almost all students who come to LaGuardia have to take and was clearly helpful for Regents preparation. Our Reading course, "Literacy and Propaganda" had been running in the high schools and was popular with students and expanding every term. See Appendix B. So, with the help of the coordinators at the High schools, we figured this tricky and arcane placement system out. See Appendix C.

All qualifying students could enter one of these courses, no matter what , and from that point on we could place them. Unfortunately, the director of our grant felt we needed our own "gateway exam" for students in the gateway courses. It had to test analytic reading and writing skills. This task fell to me, and what I came up with were dressed up summary exams. See Appendix D.

Here we found further difficulties. The *College Now!* high school faculty were to grade the exams. Fine with us. But the college and the grant were unwilling to merely take their word for what was a passing, a high passing, or a failing exam, since they was a putative conflict of interest. That is, advanced courses, courses that high school faculty like to teach, might not run if there were not enough qualifying students. So, we needed a grading rubric to somehow standardize grading and help faculty prepare students appropriately (see Appendix E), and a person at the college who would read and approve the papers. This was a task involving many hundreds of papers, and the college coordinators drew the line at this, since not only was it

tedious, but would have placed us in continual conflict with our faculty. An independent faculty member in the English Department does it now. The whole thing did not sit particularly well with the high school faculty who felt that the situation was insulting to them and also had to take class time to prep for and administer the exam. The college faculty agreed, and argued on behalf of their faculty, but administrators were adamant. So we spent one of our professional development sessions for high school faculty discussing sample tests, discovering that in some cases the high school faculty had tougher standards than ours. In this case we have brought a little bit of unwanted CUNY college culture to the high school class.

Things have quieted down somewhat. Recently, we noticed that there really is no assessment procedure for students or faculty other than the peer observation and the retention of students in the program, which is consistently highest in the LaGuardia *College Now!* So I have developed a very simple survey to get feedback from faculty and students in the courses I supervise. See Appendices F and G. We just piloted these recently and will be improving them. If we can continue to rely on funding, we plan in this way to further improve the program.

Evelyn Burg is *College Now!* Coordinator for the Communications Skills Department at LaGuardia Community College, CUNY.

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A

CSE 110 *LaGuardia Community College*

LITERACY AND PROPAGANDA

Catalogue Description: This course introduces students to methods of understanding a highly developed and pervasive discourse: propaganda. Emphasis is placed on reading materials that use the persuasive and argumentative language of politics, advertising, cultural discussions and the media. Political speeches, essays, editorials, and articles are used to enlarge the student's experience with the materials and tools of propaganda. The student will acquire the intellectual framework and sophisticated level of literacy needed to recognize and respond to the aims of propaganda.

Faculty should provide:

1. Ample and various reading assignments at the college level, focusing exercises on the student's critical reading and analytic skills
2. Consistent writing assignments fostering the student's clear written expression
3. Coverage of historical and present uses of propaganda and rhetorical techniques used in persuasion for political and advertising purposes
4. Advertising, or other propaganda projects broken down into systematic, multiple level processes, thus introducing students to the complexity of the "world of work," private or public, and encouraging acquisition of "follow-through" skills
5. A final project for students on some aspect of propaganda that requires a multiple step research process

At the conclusion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Understand that propaganda is a type of speech
2. Name a variety of historical and present uses of propaganda
3. Compare and contrast different general types of propaganda and particular techniques demonstrating the ability to draw reasonable inferences from the use of these techniques
4. Describe and reproduce a variety of these techniques in a "realistic" context
5. List a number of written sources for their knowledge of the subject that they have read in full
6. Demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate the language of politics, advertising and debates about gender and ethnicity in written and oral presentations
7. Demonstrate an understanding via a written report of the fundamental rationales for and basic structures of research with human subjects as this relates to the course

Course Number: CSE 110
Literacy and Propaganda

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Webster's New World Dictionary defines "propaganda" as "any systematic, widespread dissemination of particular ideas, doctrines, practices, etc., to further one's own cause or to damage an opposing one." In this course we will examine the way propaganda works, the role that it plays in our lives, and the way it has evolved to become more powerful and at times, difficult to distinguish from "objective" discourse.

From its beginning in 1622, this term has defined an increasingly sophisticated and controversial type of persuasive language. In our own century, mass movements, political dogmas both from the right and from the left, religious groups, advertisers and "special interest groups" have refined the use of propaganda, making it a permanent part of our everyday reality. Since it is so pervasive, propaganda requires awareness and skill to identify and to form a reasoned reaction. Propaganda breaks down our defenses by appealing directly to our emotions and cultural biases, making an "objective" response difficult.

No longer specifically identified with totalitarian governments, with their tactics of mass manipulation and "brainwashing," propaganda has taken up a complex place within the contemporary culture of the information society.

The purpose of this course is two-fold. First, we investigate the historical background of propaganda, and the methods it employs. This will involve readings as well as attention to the lively and visual arts, including film. By learning about the structures and strategies used by propagandists in different historical and cultural settings, we can provide a framework for the course's second objective: learning how to respond intelligently to propaganda, and insuring that the extreme scenario of a futuristic society totally controlled by propaganda as imagined by George Orwell, does not become reality.

The course concentrates on developing and strengthening critical reading and thinking. It encourages a healthy skepticism towards the rhetoric used to sell ideas and products while also giving students hands-on experience, using such techniques to promote their own ideas.

The final paper assignment is structured as a report in the social sciences or business and is designed to familiarize students with the rational of research methodologies.

B

Books

The books needed for the course can be purchased in the LaGuardia bookstore, located in the basement of the M Building. They are:

Required: Exploring Language, edited by Gary Goshgarian, published by Harper Collins

Or:

Endless Propaganda:The Advertising of Public Goods by Paul Rutherford of Toronto Press

Supplementary: 1984, by George Orwell, Signet edition or another appropriate full-length novel
Age of Propaganda, by Pratkanis and Aronson

In addition to these two books, I will be supplying notes, handouts, website addresses from other sources, which will give a broader perspective to our understanding of propaganda.

Exams and Assignments

There will be periodic quizzes and assignments, a mid-term examination in class, and a final project. This final project will consist of individual research into some aspect of propaganda based on the interests of the student. The final project should be structured in five parts 1) a statement of hypothesis or problem 2) a review of literature (2-3 articles) 3) an interview 4) summary of findings 5) conclusion. Students will report to the class and the faculty the progress of their research at each stage in order to receive effective supervision.

Absences, Lateness

It is expected that each student will attend regularly. Any student with four or more absences will receive a failing grade, unless the absences can be shown to have been caused by legitimate illness, etc. In addition, every student is expected to be in class on time, and a record of habitual lateness will have a serious negative effect on one's final grade.

Grading Formula
(flexible but written)

Grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:
Homework assignments and class participation: X%
Quizzes: X% Mid-Term Exam: X% Final: X%

C

Recommendation Form for College Now! Classes

High School_____

Teacher's Name_____

Student's Name_____ OSIS # _____

Course in which student is currently enrolled _____ (Title) and _____ (Number)

Please check below the grade you gave the student on the Gateway final essay:

Pass _____ Borderline Pass _____ Fail _____

Instructions: Based upon your work this semester with the student whose name is listed above, the College Now! program is asking for your recommendation with respect to the courses in which he/she should be enrolled in future semesters. These guidelines will, hopefully assist in making this recommendation.

If the student still needs to solidify reading, writhing or critical thinking skills, it would be best to recommend him/her for another Gateway Course.

- If the student's writing skills are satisfactory, but reading needs to improve, recommend CSE 110. If student has already taken CSE 110, you may want him/her to enroll in CSE103, another College Now! course, assuming your program offers it.
- If the student needs to improve his/her writing skills, he/she should enroll in ENE099.
- If a student needs to improve both his/her reading and writing skills, check both CSE110 and ENE099.
- If the student has passed CSE110 and ENE099 and has scored between 65-74 on the ELA, but you feel he/she is not quite ready for more advanced college level classes, recommend HUP102.

If the students' skills in reading and writing are strong, it may be best for a student to enroll in a college credit-bearing course other than the Gateway course. In this case, you may wish to check the "Other College Now! Course" line.

The coordinator will determine the class for which the student is qualified.

CSE110	Literacy & Propaganda	_____
HUP102	Critical Thinking	_____
ENE099	Basic Writing	_____
Other College Now! Course		_____

Coordinators: Please follow faculty recommendation, consult student's past record and make recommendation for course sequence for this particular student. Consult the Placement Memo and attached Skills Requirement Chart to help you make the most judicious choice. Please note that students may enroll in Composition I (ENG101) only if they have achieved scores of 75+ on ELA or 480+ on the SAT (Verbal) or 48+ on the PSAT (Verbal). The only other way is to have a passing Reading and Writing score on the ACT.

College Now! Office: white copy **High School Coordinator: yellow copy**

D

Questions for the student:

1. In essay form (including an introduction, body and conclusion), summarize the passage using full sentences, correct spelling, and good grammar. This should be between 4 and 6 paragraphs in total. Remember, you are not re-writing the entire piece, but explaining what it says.

2. You should begin with the main point of the reading regarding death and birth rates and then summarize the supporting information the author gives to reinforce or explain this point. Make sure you cover all the issues and include the specific data, e.g., names and statistics when relevant.

3. From what you have read here and elsewhere, as well as your life experiences, can you draw any conclusions regarding world population growth in the future? Give an intelligent reason for your opinion. Please put this into your brief concluding paragraph. (You will have 2 hours.)

(Two page reading passage not included)

F

Evaluation Rubric for Placement Exam in Gateway Courses (ENG 099, CSE 110, HUP 102)

High School_____ **Teacher's Name**_____

Course Title: _____ **Course Code:** _____

Student's Name_____ **OSIS #**_____

DIRECTIONS:

Students who are enrolled in any of the Gateway Courses will complete a reading/writing placement measure during the week of November of the 11th to determine which courses they are eligible for next. College Now! teachers will administer the placement measure, and the College Now! Office will make arrangements to have the evaluated papers picked up. In order to prepare students for this placement test, all Gateway teachers should give a practice essay about the 5th - 6th week of the semester.
Each paper should have this rubric attached to it.

READING

The topic is understood	_____
There is a clear grasp of the main idea of the passage	_____
Most secondary ideas are included and stated with general accuracy	_____
Paraphrasing is attempted	_____
Reference to required specifics: e.g., author's name are included	_____

WRITING

Main Idea is understood	_____
Main Idea is effectively placed	_____
Introduction orients the reader	_____
Principle of organization is easily perceived	_____
Support is consistent with main idea	_____
Content is adequately expressed	_____
Acceptable level of other conventions of written English	_____

Use the criteria above to determine the level of reading and writing demonstrated on the final essay.
Check one of the categories below.

Pass_____ **Borderline Pass**_____ **Fail**_____

F

College Now! Faculty Survey *Date* _____

Please take a moment to fill out this brief survey. Thanks!

1.Please list the College Now Courses you have taught

i.

ii.

iii.

2. How many years (approximately) have you been teaching for the College Now! Program?

3. How many years have you been teaching in your High School?

4. Do you plan to teach College Now! classes again? If not, why?

5. How has College Now! affected your teaching methods generally? Please answer as fully as possible.

6. Do you believe that College Now classes generally have benefitted your high school's students?
If so, please explain the benefits.

7. How have the specific course improved your student's understanding and performance? Please name the course.

8. Has this been an enriching experience? If possible, elaborate.

9. How might we make the program better for you? For the students? Please elaborate.

College Now! Student Survey *Date* _____

This survey is for the Students in the CSE (Reading) courses:
Literacy and Propaganda
Reading 103

Please take a moment to answer this survey as carefully as possible.
1. Which courses in College Now! have you taken (including the present one)?

2. Why did you decide to participate in College Now?

3. Have any other students recommended College Now! to you?

4. Would you recommend College Now to other students? Why or why not?

5. Are you planning to go to college? Has College Now! affected that decision in any way?

6. Has this or any College Now! course benefitted you? Can you tell us how?

7. Are you enjoying the class?

8. Would you recommend any improvements to our classes or the program? Please explain.

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Organization/Address: LaGuardia Community College	Telephone: 718 482 5634 FAX: 718 482 5599
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e-mail: info@ericfac.piccard.csc.com
WWW: http://ericfacility.org

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